DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 063 083 RE 004 118

AUTHOR Bushnell, Margaret
TITLE I/T/A/ News.
INSTITUTION Initial Teaching Alphabet Publications, Inc., New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE Jan 71
NOTE 5p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Basic Reading; *Elementary Grades; Followup Studies; *Initial Teaching Alphabet; *Longitudinal Studies; Phonics; *Reading Achievement; Reading Development; Reading Instruction; *Reading Research; Reading Skills

ABSTRACT

A study conducted in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, elementary schools, the first schools to adopt the Initial Teaching Alphabet (i.t.a.) approach to teaching basic reading in this country, revealed that children who started with i.t.a. had significantly less reading failure than children with traditional orthography (T.O.) training. Although the i.t.a. children were generally highly mobile and less advantaged than the T.O. children, it was found that: (1) the rate of failure (as evidenced by repeating grades) was three times higher for the T.O. group, (2) twice as many T.O. pupils received remedial reading training as did i.t.a. pupils, and (3) on subtests of a standardized battery, i.t.a. pupils scored higher on capitalization, knowledge and use of references, and dictated spelling. Further, T.O. children needed help on word recognition and comprehension, while i.t.a. children needed help only on comprehension. It was suggested that i.t.a. children had developed characteristics such as ego-strength, skills development, and learning behavior to produce a higher success rate in reading. The study is one of the few which shows the long term effects of an i.t.a. program. Tables of data are included. (AL)

ED 063083

i|t|a news news news news news news news

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Miss Margaret Bushnell
Vice President

Some 1,375 children who entered first grade in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 1964 have been tested through the years to see if the two-thirds who learned to read with the Pitman Initial Teaching Alphabet fared better scholastically than the third who started with the traditional ABC's. Of the children who still remained in the Bethlehem schools at the end of the sixth grade, the report shows that I.T.A. can dramatically cut failure and that its effectiveness is felt long after the I.T.A. code breaking has been accomplished and the transition to the regular alphabet made. (Transition to the regular alphabet is usually accomplished by the end of grade one.)

The study, financed initially by the Ford Foundation's Fund for the Advancement of Education and later also by the U.S. Office of Education, has been conducted by Dr. Albert J. Mazurkiewicz, Professor of Education, Newark (N.J.) State College.

Although the longitudinal study was weighted to favor the

RE004 118

Initial Teaching Alphabet Publications, Inc.
6 East 43 Street | New York, N. Y. 10017 | TN 7-7400
Publishers of Educational Materials in Pitman's i|t|a

children in the traditional orthography control group (the I.T.A. group included more of the highly mobile, less advantaged population), the I.T.A. pupils outshone the others on several counts:

*The rate of failure, as evidenced by the number of children who repeated grades, has been three times higher for the T.O. group (29.6% to 9.1%).

*Twice as many T.O. pupils (14.6% to 7.1%) received remedial reading as did I.T.A. pupils.

*On sub-tests of a standardized battery, the I.T.A. pupils scored higher on capitalization, knowledge and use of references, and dictated spelling.

One interesting discovery of the six years of testing, according to Dr. Mazurkiewicz, "was that the type of remedial reading needed by the 7.1% of I.T.A. pupils and the 14.6% of T.O. pupils differed. The T.O. pupil needed help on word recognition -- a basic reading skill -- and comprehension -- a basic intelligence skill -- while the I.T.A. child, who had mastered basic reading skills, needed additional help only in the comprehension area. Stated another way, the use of I.T.A. has had a significantly beneficial and lasting effect in developing those characteristics (ego-strength, skills development, and learning behavior) which combine to produce a higher success rate among children somewhat less able or equal in

(MORE)

other aspects to T.O. trained children."

Additional School Effort Praised

Although delighted with what he terms "this additional proof of I.T.A.'s effectiveness," Theodore B. Dolmatch, president of Pitman Publishing Corporation, publishers of the Early-to-Read i/t/a Program, was quick to give credit for the results to the Bethlehem school system. "The Bethlehem schools," he said, "revised their entire elementary curriculum to make sure the I.T.A. children kept the momentum that the learning alphabet gave them in their first grade year. According to Dolmatch, the Bethlehem schools provided an enriched language arts program that "took advantage of the children's new skills."

Bethlehem was the first public school system in the U.S. to try Sir James Pitman's 44-character phonemic alphabet in which the symbols have one and only one sound. I.T.A. was introduced into Great Britain in 1961 and to the U.S. in Bethlehem in 1963. Since its introduction, the new learning alphabet has been subjected to an estimated million dollars worth of research, the latest of which is the 1969 British Schools Council Report that stated, "It would appear that the best way to learn to read in traditional orthography is to learn to read in the initial teaching alphabet."

None of the studies, however, has been as complete in terms of following a class through six years of schooling as

(MORE)

the Bethlehem study. One of the major concerns of educators about I.T.A. in the U.S. has been that its effects may not be sufficiently long-lasting to justify its use. The Bethlehem longitudinal study is being offered as a refutation of that "wait-and-see" attitude.

A 1968 report on the Bethlehem study showed that remedial reading in the school system had been reduced by 75%, with the reduction directly related to learning to read with the Initial Teaching Alphabet. "The need for remedial reading has been reduced even further now that all first grades are taught with I.T.A.," says Dr. Rebecca Stewart, director of elementary education for the Bethlehem schools. Dr. William A. Bost is superintendent of schools in Bethlehem.

I.T.A. and the Early-to-Read i/t/a Program, by Dr. Albert J. Mazurkiewicz and Dr. Harold J. Tanyzer, is now being used in some 10% of U.S. school systems and close to a million children have learned to read with it in this country.

Table I

Percentage of the 1964-65 population which repeated grades, received remedial reading or both.

	T.O. N = 341	i.t.a. N = 515
Repeated one or more grades	29.62%	9.13%
Received Remedial Reading	14.66%	7.18%
Repeated grade and had Remedial Reading	8.5%	2.3%

Table II

Achievement and I.Q. scores of the 1964-65 population at the end of six years of school, with remedial readers and grade repeaters removed

	T.O. N = 232 Mean	i.t.a. N = 464 Mean	t
California Test of Mental Maturity (I.Q.)	115.99	116.24	1.79
Iowa Test of Basic Skills			
Vocabulary	35.25	34.97	1.37
Comprehension	48.77	49.07	.977
Language Skills			
Spelling	34.62	34.39	N.S.
Capitalization	30.72	31.88	5.71 ##
Punctuation	29.10	29.46	1.91 #
Usage	21.93	22.18	N.S.
Work-Study Skills			
Map Reading	23.03	23.12	N.S.
Reading Graphs, Tables	17.89	18.04	N.S.
Knowledge and Use of References	40.90	41.77	3.26 ##
Dictated Spelling	24.90	27.24	4.45 ###

approaching significance 1.91 as compared to 1.96

significant below the 1% level of 2.58

extremely high significance